

Q: How were you able to land these large contracts like the Exxon Mobil convenience stores, Amtrak and Delta airlines?

Stiller: Mobil came to us over 10 years ago and we got one convenience store that was right across from a Dunkin' Donuts. The owner said if you can do anything with this location I'll talk to you about the rest of the stores. And we increased the coffee sales of the store about five times. So we got the rest of that chain, which led to recognition in the area and we just kept getting more convenience stores. They tested us against all the other coffee companies and found that our products did indeed sell better. We offered better support. And then we signed a contract with Mobil for five years.

Q: Your company has also come up with some technological innovations.

Stiller: I think the whole convenience store area was initiated with our use of air pots or the vacuum pump, thermal server. Because historically the coffee wasn't able to be kept fresh at the convenience store level. And with those servers we were able to offer a variety of coffees with a much longer shelf life than coffee sitting on a burner.

We were one of the first to recognize the sustainable issue with coffee. We tried to work with the farms to improve the farms, the product and the workers. It makes sense from a business point of view that if the people are taken care of you're going to have a better product. Nobody that is treated poorly is going to put their heart and soul into developing a good coffee.

Q: It appears you followed Ben & Jerry's philosophy of social responsibility.

Stiller: It's been very important to us. I think it's been very motivational to people in the company knowing that they are achieving a greater good in the world through what we do. We've had sustainable coffees for quite a while. And that led the industry in organic and fair trade (coffees). We've also encouraged our customers like Exxon Mobil. It was the first convenience store on a national level to have an organic coffee as their coffee of the month. This year they've done a fair trade coffee.

Q: What do you mean by a fair trade coffee?

Stiller: A fair trade coffee is certified that the farm that it comes from is a co-op. It's owned by the farmers. They get a minimum wage. So that they can live off of that. It's a major factor right now in that coffee is the second largest commodity behind oil. But unlike oil, coffee is a product of the people. There are 25 million farmers involved in farming and developing coffee. And about 75 percent of them are small farms. So if a farmer can't earn a living and support a family with coffee, what do they do? They turn to the government for support or they can turn to other illegal crops. We're talking about a life and death situation for these people. The break-even point for coffee is about 85 or 90 cents (a pound). It doesn't pay for them to produce good coffee. Coffee prices are below 50 cents right now. So a lot of the work that goes into good coffee is not happening. Sometimes they will pick coffee four or five times during the harvest season. Now, they're picking it once because they can't afford the pickers. This whole fair trade initiative was really developed to guarantee economic stability for the farmers and with that almost guarantees more of a democracy in a lot of these Third World countries because it provides that economic stability.

Q: Has NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, had any effect on your business?

Stiller: It doesn't really come into play. I think it's more for manufactured goods as opposed to agriculture.

Q: You have a director of social responsibility to oversee that area of the company?

Stiller: I think consumers are looking for more of that from companies. A lot of the people here are really motivated to make a difference in the world. They feel it's the right thing to do.

Q: The economy is either in a recession or close to a recession. Have you seen any indication of that in your business? Or is coffee one of those products that consumers regard as a necessity?

Stiller: It is a necessity. People enjoy it. It's part of their life. It's an energizing experience. It's reflective in a sense. You sort of take a break for coffee. And lots of times ideas come to you with that reflection. In troubled times, people might drink more coffee. In the overall scheme of things, there might be a little bit of a downturn but it wouldn't be very significant.

Q: You've been doing business in Vermont since 1981. Has the state been a difficult place for your company to do business?

Stiller: I think it's been a great experience. The Vermont name has added a lot (of value). I think the people we have hired are wonderful. There is a real sense of integrity and a hard work ethic. We haven't had too many problems with the permitting process. We've always felt supported by state government and other agencies within the government. The only issue has been in the banking area where we have had trouble getting the credit lines from local banks. We went down to Boston years ago and have been banking out of the state.●

PAYING TRIBUTE TO RON CASS

• Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Ron Cass, a man who embraces the idea that one person can truly make a difference. Ron is retiring after 28 years with KXLF-TV as General Manager in Butte, MT. While his job required a keen sense of community, it was his dedication to his family and the city of Butte that I want to recall today.

Ron joined KXLF in 1974 and worked his way up the corporate ladder. He was named President of KXLF Communications, Inc. in 1986 and later added the management of KBZK in Bozeman, MT. Born in Harlowton, Ron started out as a disc jockey but soon chose television as his medium of choice. I believe he chose wisely.

During the past several years, Ron has been instrumental in helping me understand a variety of telecommunication issues. He has given me his ideas freely and helped me to understand not only the growing complexity of the industry but also the need to remember what is important for Montana TV viewers who rely on the medium for their information.

Meanwhile, Ron found himself complaining about the current state of affairs in his hometown of Butte. He realized rather quickly that talking about problems didn't produce results—actions certainly speak louder than words. Ron went into action. He now has a long list of accomplishments and I believe that Butte is a better place today because of his efforts.

Whether as President of the Butte Chamber of Commerce, a member of the United Way Board of Directors,

part of the Butte-Silver Bow Law Enforcement Commission, or even a member of the county's Study Commission, Ron rolled up his sleeves and Butte reaped the benefits. He also made a commitment to the local Exchange Club and the Pachyderms. He even battled Butte's frigid temperatures to help the Salvation Army during their annual bell ringing fundraiser at Christmas time.

Those who know Ron Cass know that his personal participation is not for personal glory or a Butte parade on St. Patrick's Day. Ron's involvement comes from his desire to give back; give back to the very folks who helped him succeed in Montana when he first arrived and decided to raise a family in Butte.

Today, Ron cherishes his family and many friends as he begins his retirement. His children, Barbara, Lura, and Dan—and his grandchildren, Timothy, Sean, Alex, Andrew, and Jake—and of course, his fiancée, Nancy all agree that "Poppa" is a true role model.

About the same time he decided to contribute his talent, energy, and strength to Butte, his grandson, Alex, was born with Down Syndrome. From that day on, Ron made it his mission to support and encourage Alex in all that he would choose to do. That has included his grandson's efforts in Special Olympics and the joys of mainstreamed education.

Ron Cass's unselfish actions throughout his CBS Television Network career transcend the airwaves. His actions are shown today in the quality of his family's lives and the many friends who will gather and honor him before or after his last "working" day.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Ron for all he has done to benefit the City of Butte, and the State of Montana. I want to wish him well in his retirement. While I am certain he will be spending plenty of time within the community he holds so close to his heart, I'm also certain that he'll be enjoying the Treasure State on the back of his motorcycle with the wind in his hair.●

MEASURE REFERRED

The following bill, previously received from the House of Representatives for concurrence, was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3282. An act to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 400 North Main Street in Butte, Montana, as the "Mike Mansfield Federal Building and United States Courthouse"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, December 14, 2001, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bills: